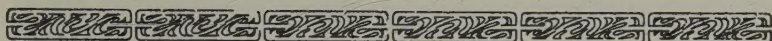


# *laughing horse*









# *laughing horse*

*Edited by* Roy E. Chanslor, James T. Van Rensselaer Jr. and  
Vol. I Willard Johnson No. 7

## Contributors to this issue

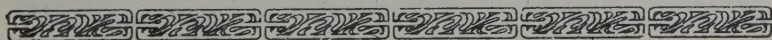
Walter Adolphe Roberts  
Arthur Davison Ficke  
Leonard Lanson Cline  
Eda Lou Walton  
F. G. Applegate  
Clarkson Crane  
Witter Bynner  
George Sterling  
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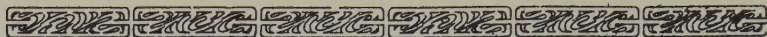
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## Happy-Go-Lucky

*From THE BOOK OF LOVE, a translation of LIVRE D'AMOUR by Charles Vildrac.*

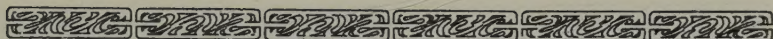
By Witter Bynner

Happy-go-lucky, to follow the road,  
Is a better lot than you supposed,  
Just to enjoy the to and fro  
Of all the pleasant things there are.

Happy-go-lucky, to sail your life,  
Is worth whatever pain be in it,  
Just to feel how good the sun is  
Every fleeting minute.

Would you be aware how happy you were,  
Continuing happy over the hour?  
Would it mean any more  
Than loving, merely with the eyes,  
For a poor little moment, the neck, the eyes,  
The mysterious heel that daintily flies,  
Of all the pleasant things there are?

Come then, life allows you living,  
Earth is not so cold as yet,  
The intervals are not so rare  
When you say to yourself that it's good to live,  
When you simply undertake to live  
In the cooling grass, in the warming sand,  
Or along the street, and only care  
For the easy course at your eyes command  
Of all the pleasant things there are.



## *White Wings*

**The Poet and the Publican**—We have a new contribution to the theory of aesthetic from a unique source. This theory, advanced by the council of the City of Berkeley, will probably go into the history of the subject as the "Utilitarian Theory." Stated briefly, it holds that art, and more specifically art in the form of concerts, dog-shows, plays, menageries and circuses, needs police regulation. Some argue that this takes art out of the field of aesthetics and places it in that of criminology, but there is not space to discuss that question adequately here. Its chief exponent, Councilman Charles Heywood, head of what is euphemistically yclept "The Sanitary Department of the City of Berkeley," states: "Art needs regulation. There are more crimes committed in the name of art than anything else. Many plays that artists consider art to the lay mind are immoral and need to be suppressed." Whether or not he proposes to extend the duties of his department so as to keep the garbage out of our minds, too, he has not said; but if he does, we trust that he will be more successful than the combined forces of Church and Heaven have been in the last 2000 years.

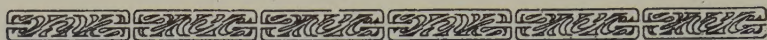
It is interesting to note that the theory already has its opponents. Charles Keeler, poet and director of the local Chamber of Commerce, believes that concerts and plays should not be placed in the same category with dog shows, menageries and circuses. This distinction apparently did not enter the heads of the burgomasters, for as Councilman Heywood somewhat proudly asserts, "there are no artists on the council."

(For further reference see "The San Francisco Chronicle" for March 7th, 1923.)

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**The University of Wisconsin Falls Into Line**—With the row raised over the publication of a fortnightly magazine entitled "The Scorpion," of which Upton Sinclair's son, David, is one of the editors, the University of Wisconsin joins with its sister universities, California and Michigan, in an open fight against non-conformity of opinion. The authorities are incensed, I take it, over the reprinting in the "Scorpion" of Upton Sinclair's article on the University of Wisconsin from "The Goose-Step." Compared to most of the other articles



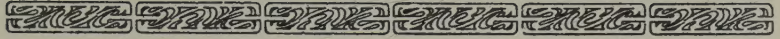


in that book that on the University of Wisconsin is almost a mild pat on the back. As far as I can make out, Sinclair finds little to object to there save the increasing tendency of the churches to stifle free thought and enquiry.

I have before me the first copy of "The Scorpion," which is the one that has caused the trouble. Save only for the Sinclair article and a short story on the attempted suppression of "Laughing Horse," I fail to see anything that should cause the authorities to arise in their wrath. It looks to me like a commendable attempt to afford a medium for the expression of ideas at the university. It will be remembered by people who are interested in such things that the University of Michigan caused G. D. Eaton, the literary editor of the campus Sunday edition of the student newspaper, to be discharged and barred from further connection with the university publications because he had reviewed favorably, John Kenneth Turner's great piece of journalism, "Shall It Be Again?" Both of these cases of universities meddling with the rights of their students to free expression, seem to me to be much worse than my own expulsion from the University of California, although they are all in a way analogous. I was expelled on an obvious pretext, but at least there was a pretext, while these other fellows, although none of them, I believe, have been expelled, were quite frankly punished for nothing but their opinions.

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**Sabotage**—Recently a professor of English in our state university declared that it was his opinion that nine-tenths of the students attending that institution should be shoveling coal, or washing dishes instead of trying to take on a higher education. Now, undoubtedly his statement is true, but the professor lays himself open to criticism by those who know their business ethics as divulged in such journals as "Success" and "The American Magazine" by the nation's leading haberdashers, retail grocers, commercial travelers and realtors. "An employee shall be loyal to his firm, and shall not condemn the product thereof." ("Secrets of Success" by Ananias Jenkins). This professor's condemnation, considering the human nature of the product turned out by the factory of which he is an employee, borders on sabotage. If the goods were undershirts (as they might as well be) and he, the professor, was employed in sewing them up (as he might better be) and he claimed from the housetops that the undershirts weren't fit to wear, as they probably



wouldn't be) the president of the concern would send him packing in an instant.

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**Laughing Stock**—The Association Against the Prohibition Amendment claims that it has gained approximately seventy-five votes in the new Congress; that it has defeated Mr. Volstead, elected as his successor a man who will be friendly to their cause; and converted the majority flock leader in the House to "Light wines and beer now; no saloons ever!"

"We have to fight a well organized, highly subsidized and determined minority, whose fanaticism has caused us to be police ridden, spied upon, unduly taxed and lectured by our public servants on matters with which they have no concern whatever," says Thomas Denny, one of the chairmen of the association.

He further states that, "In considering Prohibition, we are not primarily concerned in the use of alcohol as a beverage, but rather with the imminent danger of losing those 'inalienable rights' guaranteed to us by the Constitution as part of our inheritance as free born men and women which have been improperly taken from us by the Eighteenth Amendment.

"SO INTEMPERATE ARE OUR LAWS IN THE NAME OF TEMPERANCE THAT WE HAVE BECOME THE LAUGHING STOCK OF THE WORLD."

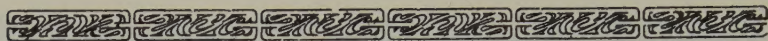
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**The Wages of Sin**—Virtue is its own reward; vice is more handsomely reimbursed.

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**Carl Sandburg**—It was my great pleasure, during the recent visit of Carl Sandburg to the bay district, to be present at both of his readings, the one in Wheeler Hall in Berkeley and the one in the Bellevue Hotel in San Francisco. I took particular pains to note the differences, as he read them, between the pieces in verse and the Rootabaga Stories which are in prose. The truth must be told even if every Young Intellectual of my acquaintance cuts me cold for it. There was no difference. I am convinced that no one, assuming an ignorance of both the prose and the verse could have told which was prose and which was verse. I asked George Sterling, who has certainly a cunning ear for verse if anyone has, afterwards, how he liked the prose





pieces, only to discover that he thought the whole show had been in free verse. The truth seems to me, although doubtless no one will agree with me, that both the prose and the so-called verse were poetry—poetry in the deeper rather than the technical sense, and that neither were verse. Whether Sandburg writes verse or real poetry or poetic prose or just plain prose, his work is real; it is alive and in the last analysis it is beautiful—beautiful with a barbaric, primitive, fierce passionate beauty. There is a kind of poetry which lies behind every authentic work of art. All such works are, in the best sense, poetry. Sandburg, like Whitman, and indeed like Rodin and Whistler and Joseph Conrad, is a poet, not because his writings are verse, but because he is a creator of beauty. All creators of beauty are poets.

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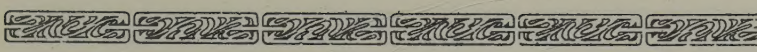
**Further Observation on Chivalry**—A man who admits the intellectual superiority of women is an ass; he who does not is a cad.

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**The Efficacy of Asininity**—The theory, propagated at large today, that the prosperity and power of a nation is in direct proportion to the enlightenment thereof is one of the most simian yet developed and on analysis will prove to be only another case of "man playing an ape to his dreams." Actually, enlightenment, which implies justice, liberty and equality, has no more to do with the material well-being of a state than the teachings of Christ have to do with the Christian Church. Quite the opposite is true; study any country at the peak of its glory and you will find that its rulers are by preference vain, hypocritical and stupid and its people venerates those traits and adds bigotry and asininity to the list. It is necessary to take only one example to prove this point beyond refutation. What country in all the world today is the greatest, the most powerful, the most renowned? What nation has the finest institutions, the most flourishing industries, is the wealthiest? Those who know their penal code will answer in chorus—America! Yet, this nation is built on the flimsiest of shams, is controlled by dunderheads, liars, hypocrites, dissemblers and knaves, is wedded to bigotry, ignorance and deceit, and is prosperous withal and functions smoothly.

Without doubt those who cry for more widespread enlightenment and who propagate liberal notions are a menace to a nation. Although they may be animated by the highest





emotions, may be working for the greatest general good, they must be thrown down and destroyed, for the decay and final dissolution of a state have always followed intellectual awakening. The patriot will stamp upon any liberalizing influence as he would a snake, having faith only in the efficacy of his own asininity.

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**Reason Enough**—Recently I jogged through a mountain valley known by romantic visitors as The Valley of Silent Men. It was so yclept by some story-writer or other of "The Great Southwest," and is therefore known in at least forty of these States by the young girl population. I stopped at but one house during my passage through the valley. At a ranch to buy apples. Sure enough, I didn't speak a word. She knew I wanted apples because it was neither meal or bed time, and the sign on the gate said apples were for sale. She therefore told me what I wanted, how much I could carry on a horse, what the price was, how seldom she went to town, what her last visitor had looked like, when her husband had died and what of, (which I doubted), where the road turned to go to where I wanted to go, and what a fine day it was. . . . I hadn't the heart to stop at any other ranch in the entire valley, for I glimpsed at every door, and noted with pity the dogged silent husbands. "Poor wretches," I sighed, and spurred my laughing horse forward.

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**Marriage vs. Courtship**—Courtship is a banquet of love; marriage is an attempt to live on the scraps.

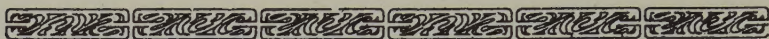
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**Kid-Fodder**—One of our subscribers reports that she is delighted with the Laughing Horse; that its bright covers delight her small child; and that its stout wrapping-paper pages defy his eager pulling fingers. "It is most admirably suited to the growing baby," she asserts, "which serves a double purpose in that my husband is then spared its cynical influence. He continues his business as a law-abiding citizen in the depths of normalcy and has no more ideas than are good for him."

*Willard Johnson*

*Roy Edwin Chanslor*

*James T. Van Rensselaer Jr.*



## *Polypimple's Apocalypse*

By Leonard Lanson Cline



HE REV. HORACE POLYPIMPLE sat alone in his room, in the boarding house on Catherine street, just behind the red brick church of the Friends of Jesus. Late into the night he brooded, biting his nails and scratching his acne. These devices acted as a mild sedative upon him. He was pledged against tobacco and wine, but indeed he had never had any craving for these things. Only in the communion did the juice of the grape, sedulously watered, moisten his lips.

Biting his nails he brooded; and all the strength of his ministry, he felt, depended on the resolution tonight of a horrible doubt. Things had happened recently that were undermining his faith.

The words of Christ, "When two or three are gathered together in my name . . .," flamed in Horace's harrassed consciousness. Well, and what had happened when two or three had been gathered together in His name? Strange occurrences, recently; very strange, and inexplicable by any process of faith or reasoning that Horace could bring to bear upon them.

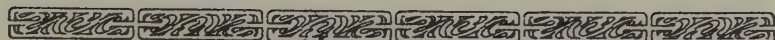
Just the week before, while Dr. Higbie Chaffinch's congregation in the Episcopal church on Cross street was in the hoarse throes of a hymn, lightning had nipped the cross right off the steeple and sprinkled splinters all over the neighborhood.

Then, at Wednesday night prayer meeting in the Rev. Lubly Phwat's Presbyterian church, at Front and Catherine, when patriarchal Deacon Goodie, palsied and holy, arose to give his weekly prayer, the ceiling had given way and crashed down upon the old man's lifted face.

These little episodes were disturbing in a general way, although of course, from the higher sanctity of the church of the Friends of Jesus, Horace smiled a little secretly at the discomfiture of his wealthier and more stylish colleagues. But only this past Sunday the most startling of all the recent disasters had taken place, and it was in his own church.

His congregation swarmed forward to the communion table, Elder Beagle well in front, with Elder Gottwoof and





Deacon Blum staggering hotly along behind him. Elder Beagle filled his glass and downed it. Elder Gottwoof filled his glass and downed it. Deacon Blum filled his glass and shuddered the wine joyously down. Then Elder Beagle gave vent to a most horrible oath and fell on his face. Deacon Blum, gagging convulsively, regurgitated on the communion table, and his spectacles fell down and broke into a million pieces. And Elder Gottwoof, who was still, in spite of his sixty years, robust enough, charged head-down into the on-coming flock, madly clasping his stomach.

He caught slim, shivering old Miss Pennystiff fair in the middle and floored her, gasping for breath. He trod full on the toes of choleric August Schmierle, fat and em-purpled; and August, fighting frantically back out of the path of the wild deacon, knocked little Tommy Jones out of his mother's arms. Then, while Tommy's god-forsaken squall shrilled piercingly above the general whoobuh, Deacon Beagle disappeared out the front door.

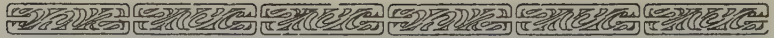
Down Plum street he dashed, screaming curses. At the corner there was a watering trough. The Deacon did not hesitate. In he went, still head down. Only the quick work of an unreligious milk-man, somewhat tipsy with moonshine, saved the deacon from being **drowned**!

Horace arose and paced his threadbare carpet, picking his nose. Yes, **drowned**, and he might just as well have been, for it was doubtful whether the deacon would recover. By mistake, the communicants had been served varnish instead of wine.

There was, of course, an element of human carelessness behind all this trouble. But—and on this point Horace's whole career depended—why had the varnish remained varnish? Memory of the marriage feast persisted in Horace's mind. Why did not the hand of Providence, intervening, rectify the error of the pastor on this one occasion, vouchsafe just one more miracle to vindicate the church before the scoffers? Was it more difficult for the Almighty to change varnish into wine than it was water? And was the occasion of holy communion less sacred than that of a plain wedding?

Horace, sweating, rejoiced dismally that his church had not adopted the doctrine of transsubstantiation. How could Dr. Chaffinch have explained such an accident to his flock?

But how, indeed, could he explain this negligence of Providence to his own satisfaction? If he had been Jahweh, would he not have been glad to say the word. Just say a



word, and lo! the varnish would be wine. Horace itched and perspired, and frantically gnawed his nails. Then suddenly the truth burst upon him with a glory intolerable, and he sank to his knees and began to cry.

That was it, of course. Centuries ago, when the wedding guests slavered with tongues hanging out, wine was a good thing. Everybody used it. But now the world, hurtling on to a millennium of righteousness, had decreed that wine was raging. The church stood up unanimously against it, irrespective of creed. Heaven itself was undoubtedly convinced; prohibition, alleluia, prohibition, hosanna, amen! Should the Lord turn bootlegger? Here was a divine revelation that Volstead and Providence were of one mind.

Horace rushed to his desk, and feverishly began to write. What a sermon! The burning bush was out of date; the Lord had appeared to him in a jug of varnish. He would deliver the sermon next Sunday. Or, if Deacon Beagle should die, he would use it at the funeral.

And at the thought of that dramatic triumph the eyes of the Rev. Horace Polypimple shone with ardor, and his hurrying pen blurted great gobs of ink on his paper as the inspiration fell into burning words.

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## *Matriarchy*

By Walter Adolphe Roberts.

Their dull democracies commence to wane.

Cooped in their capitals of steel and stone,

The ape, the tiger and the hog have grown

Thick through the neck and atrophied of brain.

So the wheel turns, and your day comes again.

Magnificent, in tyranny, alone,

You will loll back on your pomegranate throne

And teach man how an empress shows disdain.

I shall make songs to greet you. I shall bear

Roses and subtle perfumes for your hair.

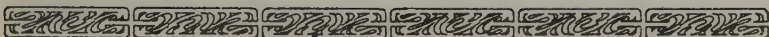
I shall not fear that you will bid me go.

For though you spurned all others, you would spare

Swinburne and Keats and Baudelaire and Poe,

Pan and his troop of fauns, and poor Pierrot.





New York City, January 20, 1923.

Editor of the Laughing Horse,  
Berkeley, California.

Dear Sir: You will be sorry to learn that the gifted Miss Knish, serving as a nurse, was killed in France during the war, under circumstances of frightful atrocity. As her literary executor, I have been unable to find that she left many unpublished poems: but here are three which you may have.

Please make it clear to your readers that these are posthumous works.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Davison Ficke.

(Editor's Note:—Admirers of *Spectra* by Anne Knish and Emanuel Morgan, published in 1916 by Mitchell Kennerley, will be grieved to hear of the death of this promising young Bolshevik artist; and will be grateful to Mr. Ficke for rescuing even these few gems for posterity.)

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## *Opuscles*

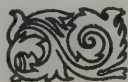
by Anne Knish

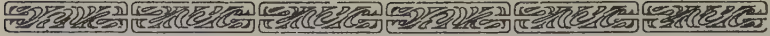
Opus 421: **Portrait of Witter Bynner.**

This cheese  
Is sold by the pound—  
But, Oh, its vacuums  
Come from Switzerland!

Opus 422: **Portrait of the Author.**

The godly tried to ruin her . . . .  
But she preserved  
Intact  
Her allegiance  
To the ancient darkness.





## *The Moral Equivalent of Booze*

By Haniel Long



WHEN some years ago it became known that I was engaged upon an extensive inquiry into the moral equivalent of Booze, I received letters from persons in every part of the country, letters which moved me, from persons who regarded prohibition (then imminent) as the approach of something worse than death. Man being human must get drunk, sighed Byron. He was right; and we who were about to lose the bottle would need, I reflected, something very unusual to distract us.

I answered these letters at once. I advised my correspondents that the refuge of intoxication might still be theirs, inasmuch as history shows time and again that divine vertigo exists apart from certain distillations commonly employed to bring it about. And I instanced as typical causes of it,

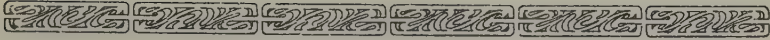
LOVE,  
RELIGION,  
MOTION,  
ART.

Most of my correspondents thought I was hoaxing them, and wrote me no more. But a few explained that it was impossible or inconvenient for them to fall in love. Others objected to religion because they were doing well in business. Still others wrote that in their cities it was impossible to resort to motion, and they preferred a substitute of a different sort, about which they remained vague. And some, who had never heard of art, inquired what brand of it I recommended, what form it came in, and where it could be obtained.

My *magnum opus* will not be accessible to the general public for some years, and I feel that I should make a brief statement of my conclusions for the benefit of those who may be concerned.

Anyone who has ever loved will agree that Love is an inebriation like no other. Its phraseology has been stolen, even. Wine is said to blush; a philosopher of the old school referred to his bottle as his Spouse. "Getting" religion also



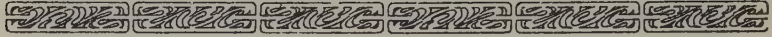


transforms the world, and suggests secrets of destiny which blind the wondering neophyte. Yet, if one is prudent, so deep a potation need bring in its train no dark mornings after. Even before 1920 the religious were never boozers. Why? They said they had something better. So with lovers; no lover was a hard drinker, so long as love ran smoothly. "Leave but a kiss within the cup," sang one popular poet to his lady. But if your beloved jilted you, it went without saying that you got drunk. People expected it. The pleasure of motion, whether skating or swimming or looping the loop, is a foundation of friendship and a persuasion that life is good. If there is no rapture in flying a kite, where are we to find it? Horsemen like so many centaurs on a polo field, ball players who leap as though at the press of a single button: those who live in cities where they never see such sights have only to organize themselves and wreck a sufficient number of buildings, clear the debris away, and lay out gymnasia, stadia, natatoria, and what not. In the very course of the adventure, which may amount locally to a kind of civil war with incidental bloodshed, they will find exercise and excitement.

There is today, I feel, a fair amount of falling in love; many persons go to gesture in the open, especially children and young men; and the number of religious persons, though unsatisfactory to a statistician, is far from small. But there are so few who find their happiness in art that it is to me a genuine pleasure to call this form of ecstasy to the attention of the great American public.

An artist may perhaps be defined as a man who has feelings about nature or human nature, anything or anybody, and who wishes to relieve these feelings of the ignominy of perishing by giving them, in his medium, a kind of deathlessness. He communicates his spirit to others as he can, it may be in irritating ways, by means of poetry, by means of the pipe-organ. At first, such a person may not seem armed with much power. But a **feeling** surpasses an idea in a dozen ways; it travels faster, it penetrates more mysteriously.

Let us imagine a man who feels the presence of a Future Thing, or describes a Tremendous Meaning behind the events of every day. A white flame plays upon the surface of his painting or above the periods of his prose, and passes into the being of all who touch his work. Imagine that among those so affected are persons who believe that life is a matter-of-fact affair and should be lived in a matter-of-fact way.



That is, without any insane desire to make the present so delightful arrangements of society appear unsatisfactory or nugatory. What results from the encounter? A ruction terrible to the sobriety of the person concerned. Something has attacked him which he cannot combat. Can you argue with a white flame? Can you open the door and put it out? It is neither here nor there, it is everywhere: dissolved in one's veins, trembling in the air-like music. The matter is exasperating, for it undermines the idea of matter-of-factness of life.

Without art, each successive generation might fall into the error of believing that things are what they appear to be, that human beings are merely bipeds capable of working at so much an hour to fatten their employer, of going to war and getting gassed or killed to protect him. Those who are ignorant of art or indifferent to it are apt to hold such views about other people, though even the toughest of them keep for themselves a romantic regard, unjustifiable of course, but in essence artistic.

Art at its highest is complete intoxication; at its lowest it is still the foe of sobriety. In the world of art there have been, one should admit, the occasional toppers as well as the great habitual drunkards. It follows that men intent upon seeking inebriation through literature or the arts, should entrust themselves to the greatest and most divine Drunkard they can find, take hold of his hand, and let him lead them to the Vine where hang clusters of golden never-fading delight.

If Americans cannot learn to do this, is it pessimistic to feel that the worst is still to come?

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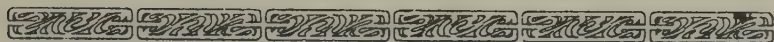
## *Every Now and Then*

By Alice Corbin.

Every now and then  
My little life  
Bursts into a flame . . . . .

But the rubber-coated firemen  
Put it out.





*Church at Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico*

*by F. G. Applegate*

## *From a Nietzschean's Notebook*

by R. H.

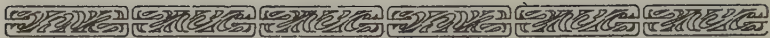


CERTAIN DAMN FOOL tells me that in view of the infinity of knowledge and wisdom which I do not possess, I should feel exceedingly intellectually humble, even in the presence of ignorant imbeciles who know utterly nothing, and never, in their own delightful phrase, even stop to think. Leaving out of the question the fact that saying I am not wise does not prove that I am not, and temporarily conceding, for the sake of argument, that I do not know it all, my view of this theory is extremely limited. I insist that I have as much right to feel proud as I have duty to feel humble. Mathematics covers the case quite simply, in the expression.

Zero is to One less than One is to Infinity!

\* \* \* \* \*

The trouble with primary education is, that it seems



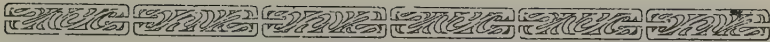
entirely based on the theory of professional pedagogists that certain ideas are beyond the comprehension of the infant mind. Therefore, in order to be teaching them something they can understand, teach them lies, prejudices, misstatements of fact, anything so long as it is what the pedagogical expert—usually a seedy person with a mathematically moral soul—labels comprehensible. Children have a sort of subtle instinct that revolts against the assimilation of all this sort of dehydrated rot; how often some purposeful teacher sets up the cry “But they don’t want to learn anything!” The system works double injury: it generally deprives the student of all the really interesting facts; and it produces a sadly atrophied mental state. The predigested ideas, being obvious and comprehensible, arouse no healthy simian curiosity, and the eagerness of our kind to know what it’s all about is soon supplanted by an acceptance of somebody else’s ready made hand-me-downs. Your pupil becomes lazy, and no longer lives on knowledge, nor curiosity. If he feels conscientious about it, he soon evolves miraculous defenses of his sloth: the search for truth no longer interests him, he tells you; he lives by faith, and his cosmos is spiritual. Whereupon you call him a prejudiced imbecile, and with some heat he denies that he is prejudiced. Reminds me of the story of the Two Gentlemen, one of whom called the other a Dirty Person of Canine Antecedents, whereupon the other retorted immediately—

“Who says I’m dirty?”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Reason is futile. Live with just sufficient reason to comprehend your own emotions.” This is a weird statement; I think it was intended as an attack on reason, but the more I think about it, the more I believe that its practice would involve restricting one’s emotions to a very limited scale. After a lifetime of study, devoting myself assiduously to works on anthropology, Assyriology, biology, chiropractic, chemistry, embryology, mathematics, psycho-analysis, theology, theosophy, vedantic literature, and wise tomes in general, I find myself and my reason still baffled at times by the eccentric behavior of my simple emotions. So the above-quoted philosophy is an attack both on the use and amplification of reason and emotion; it denies to reason the fields in which it may work with success; and forbids emotion to spread itself beyond the limits which a tethered reason can cover. Personally I prefer the code of the one who said “I am come that ye may have Life more abundantly.”





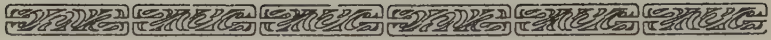
Nietzsche, wasn't it?

\* \* \* \*

The Superman is a conception that could not have arisen save in the mind of a puritan, and the fact that his various protagonists have dabbled in poetry, prophecy, science, and other fine arts as side lines, need not becloud the issue a bit. The weakness in their gospel lies in the absence of any definite statement as to what the Superman is for, but in their admiring subconsciousness they know only too well, and I propose to resolve their complex. As we all know, the purpose of a puritan is to purify; and as we all should know, to purify means to kill—in other words, to sterilize. (See, e. g., our notions of physical, mental, moral cleanliness.) Now that is exactly the mission of the Superman: the destruction of all life, including his own, and the possibility of a repetition of life. Upward goes our way from species to super-species, finding life increasingly intolerable as it goes. Higher species and higher individuals are alike in their denial of life as pleasurable; Man is more grief-ridden than the Amoeba; the philosopher less capable of delirious delight than the banker or bum. At the same time each successful species maintains itself by development in the arts of destruction and death: evolution, in fact, represents a steady progression towards zero of the will to live, and a similar progression towards infinity of the technique of slaughter. So the Superman, ultimate creature that he will be, no longer hampered by the will to live persisting so blindly in us, and so necessary for his procreation, will recognize clearly that the only hindrance affecting his will to power is life itself, and possessing the necessary intelligence, will thereupon turn upon life and destroy it totally. (At this point, lovers of the Old Testament may find comforting allegory in the story of Samson.) And at this point poor life, (alias God; see Butler) which has so long been blindly and messily trying to evolve a decent way to commit suicide, will accomplish the weary job with a great sigh of relief. And the universe will roll on, impersonal, lifeless, rhythmic, clean, glorious, free!

\* \* \* \*

I do not react favorably to: poetry by Edna St. Vincent Millay; reviews praising the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay; reviews criticising other reviews for not sufficiently praising the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay; sonnets beginning, "As when in some far—;" cocoanut frosting on otherwise edible cakes; pictures of the football team of the



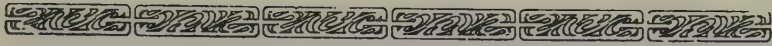
Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute; having a spotlight turned on me while some senescent chorus girl with hair, heart and teeth of purest gold sings a song wondering where her saccharine daddy's gone; Irvin S. Cobb's attempts to be funny; crisp editorial comment culled from the state press; Boy Scouts; mothers who do not want me to marry their daughter; mothers who do want me to marry their daughter; paper covers on books; peanuts; opera seasons; lectures delivered at the annual teachers' institute of Erie County, Pa., by the County Superintendent of Schools; radical magazines that publish very dull smutty stories as a matter of duty; books of verse entitled "A few flowers from the Garden, or Messages of Cheer along Life's Highway;" football players who bustle actively, wearing nose guards; hatboys, bellboys, and hautboys; trolley cars with seats running lengthwise; saxophones; capitalists; monogamy; umbrellas . . . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

I recently attended a wedding. To a civilized person like myself, interested in anthropology, this quaint tribal custom proved at least as interesting as a baptism. A somewhat ornately, but still not unbeautifully gowned person, who was said to be the priest of God, was in charge of affairs, and I must say carried things off in what appeared to me a rather high-handed fashion, taking advantage with mob psychology, the element of suspense, and the young people's obvious and natural sexual preoccupation with each other to extract from each of them a series of most impossible and ludicrous promises, concluding this exhibition of officially sanctioned blackmail in the name of his firm, the so-called Father, Son and Holy Ghost. . . . Those in attendance appeared to be mostly awestruck young virgins arrayed in the most provocative and tantalizing raiment, of the effect of which they must of course have been entirely unaware, uncomfortable young and old men, and a select coterie of old gals well past the last dangerous age, whose main interest in the affair was, one readily noted, a torturing of their jaded sensibilities by the delight of witnessing the formalities preceding the Bridal Night . . . When not being frankly, indecently pop-eyed with curiosity, the entire assemblage found relief in pretending to adopt the belief that the ideas involved in marriage found adequate expression in the hymn entitled, "The Voice that Breathed O'er Eden," the second canto of Tennyson's Princess, and the love poems of Felicia Hemans and H. G. Wells.

I think I shall have to compose a Ritual of Marriage for





the Civilized. If so, I shall certainly not be guilty of the clerical inconsistency of quoting St. Paul in defence of matrimony, and thereafter omitting from the ceremony the word "obey."

\* \* \* \*

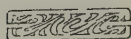
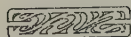
There is nothing particularly significant about the fact that I have a very recent niece, but I note with considerable interest the fact that she is referred to as a "good" infant on those occasions when she does not yell her head off. This is most illuminating and revelatory of the broad foundations on which our conceptions of good and evil rest: good, it appears, is that which maketh us comfortable. My personal preference is for more dynamic ethics.

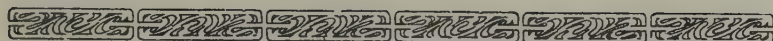
\* \* \* \*

I am not by profession an expounder of Christian dogma, and in my private life I am inclined to agree with the late John Wesley that there was only one Christian, who died on the cross. But some of the widespread notions of Christian principles are so out of alignment that there is distressingly evident need of a sensible man to answer them, and for once, in defiance of principle, I offer myself as a martyr to the truth. All this because recently I have been reading a pamphlet by a couple of zealots who were heatedly debating the "ethic of passivity as exemplified by the remark of Jesus 'Resist not evil.'" At that point, it seems, they had closed the book and gone to debating and the result was a marvellous compound of remarks about Tolstoi, non-resistance, Oriental religions, peace on earth good will to men, passivity, and general unclassified guano. As a matter of fact, the remark half-quoted above is one of the most militant in the Four Gospels: "Resist not evil, but OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD!"

It is a singular phenomenon that during the Advent season all through these states there foregather, not on the new Mithraic Sun-day, but on the good old Hebrew Sabbath, little groups of Christian young men who are willing to risk limb, and if need be, life, in the practice of this principle. They are trained by a spiritual chieftain who invariably reminds them of this rubric just before the sacred exercises begin, saying unto them with no little degree of emphasis, "A GOOD OFFENSE IS THE BEST DEFENSE."







## *A Prize for the Goose-Step*

One of the most enthusiastic boosters for "The Goose-Step" is George R. Kirkpatrick, author of "War, What For?". Kirkpatrick has been a professor in several colleges, and fell victim to the Goose-steppers. So he knows the system from personal experience, and he has suggested a plan to get publicity for the book.

Following his suggestion, I hereby offer a prize for the best review of "The Goose-Step" written by any student in any American university, college, or high school, and published in any newspaper, or magazine of any character. The competition will close May 15th, and all reviews must be published and must reach Professor Kirkpatrick by that date.

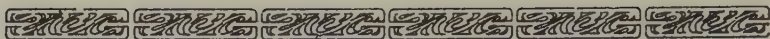
The prize will consist of a complete set of my books so far as I have them available, a total of fifteen volumes, bound in cloth and each volume autographed by me.

All reviews must bear the name and address of the writer, plainly written, and they are to be sent, not to me personally, but to George R. Kirkpatrick, Box 473, Madison Square Station, New York City. Professor Kirkpatrick will act as one of the judges, and will name the other two.

The outcome of the contest will be announced in the LAUGHING HORSE, and the review which wins the prize will be published in the monthly.

Upton Sinclair,  
Pasadena, Calif.

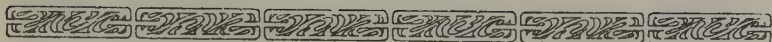




## Copy

By Eda Lou Walton.

I have written many verses about you,  
Now I am through.  
Like an orange I have sucked you dry,  
Now I throw you into the garbage.  
Why should I cherish you  
More than other objects of my passion  
For copy?  
You may lie  
With peelings of eaten potatoes,  
Slimy squash, pithy cucumber peelings,  
Cores of despatched apples,  
Burnt feathers and feet of young chickens,  
Bear-eyed heads of old hens  
Whose necks I have wrung  
Whose flesh I have baked  
For the shredding of my small white teeth,  
With all things I have been fed by,  
With all forces  
By which my creative instinct,  
Having been thwarted in producing children,  
Has been fertilized  
For the production of silly verses,  
You may lie  
And rot!  
You thought I loved you?  
Lord, No,  
I did not!  
At the time your juice was sweet,  
Soothing to my harsh lips,  
And your curved glow  
Was satisfying to my eyes.  
I was satiated of other fruit,  
And you were an excellent orange,  
Special, Sun-kissed, Navel,  
Straight from California.  
Now your flat, bitter skin  
Nauseates me.  
You may go!  
How should I know  
It would end so?  
Where?  
What do I care!



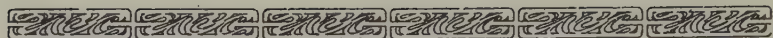
## *The Marking System*

By George Cronyn.



S I SIT and look out at the green hills of spring and think of the sins I committed as a teacher, I number among the foremost my adherence to the marking "system." Of all futile and stupid ideologs, of all blindly worshipped fetiches, of all cranky and crazy rule-of-thumb devices for keeping the educational machinery in motion, the marking system is the most pernicious! Cause of heart-eating cankers in the sensitive student, of boundless dismay and discouragement to the "dull" one, that perpetual unsolved problem of the teacher, root of silly conceit in the submissive or clever pupil whose apt or yielding personality thrives on the contention for the "rewards of merit," now holding back and retarding those who should be tempted cautiously toward some bit of knowledge suitable for their own nutriment, or again, unduly and falsely stimulating the naturally precocious to an assumed interest! At the very start of school life it puts all activity on the meritricious basis of a struggle for a material reward, a reward, moreover, subject to the caprice, prejudices, and sex of the teacher. Sex? Sex enter into marking? Certainly! And all the blindnesses and inhibitions of the marker! In fact, the vaunted system is in truth no system at all. It is a jumble of myth and error; the myth, that children profit by it, the error, that is necessary to the continuation of effort.

There are several types of marking in common use, but two common systems are the academic, in which the quality of work is represented by a precise percentage, and the "liberal," which employs simple symbols, such as A, B, C, D, and E, or the corresponding 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. In the latter case, the first grade stands for excellent, the second for good, the third for fair, the fourth for poor (usually a failure) and the last for complete failure. Marking by percentages assumes an enormous amount of labor on the part of the instructor, and an implicit belief in the inability to precisely evaluate intellectual achievement. We give you 88 in English, for instance. But why 88? Why not 90? Do we really believe that there is that infinitesimal difference to be observed; between your work and the 90 stu-



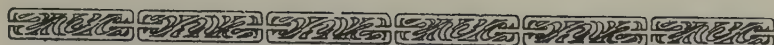
dent? Well then, hide the names on the papers and change the instructors; now who gets the 90? The difference would seem to lie quite in the mind of the marker, not in the papers!

But, you say, in Mathematics and Science the case is different. Here we have no haze of estimate, no chance for the fallibility of human judgment. You may have so many problems to solve; for each of these there is one correct answer. Q. E. D. The percentage of error can be determined decimally. But can it? There are in fact, as regards home work, three methods of arriving at results: first, by recalling the formula, secondly, by "figgerin' it out," and lastly, by copying. Class examinations may tend to diminish the value of the last method, but it still remains a favorite among a healthy fraction of students. Teachers naturally frown upon copied work as a fraud and a cheat, but as the rewards of the game partake of the material, it is only natural that students should use material short cuts. Since there is no premium on originality or independence, why not trust to the few conscientious who actually perform the uninspired labor of the class?

Another factor enters into the calculations of the marker. Suppose the method is correct, the reasoning sound, and the problem 98% solved, the answer, however, wrong through an error in the last step. Should any credit be given for the work? Most teachers would say no. Absolute accuracy is the prime requisite of a precise science. Or suppose that the answer is correct, but arrived at by a route quite different from that of the text. Should we approve or disapprove of this straying from the path of righteousness? Most teachers do not accept any method but that of the text in use. It is to be noticed that there is no unanimity of opinion in regard to either of the above cases.

Some teachers give credit on report cards for effort, enthusiasm, and such vague determinants; others give credit only for the most literal results. But the most extraordinary element entering into the number of Excellents, Goods, and Failures, is the law of averages as determined by Boards of Education. The statistician on the Board of Education of Millboro finds that on the average, throughout the school system of that city, the following percentages obtain over a period of ten years: those receiving 1's, 8.9%, those receiving 2's, 22.3%, those receiving 3's, 48%, those receiving 4's, 14.1%, and those receiving 5's, 7%. Now the Board of

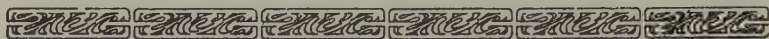




Education in one of its periodical bulletins (for it is one of the most enlightened and scientific Boards) calls the attention of the teachers to the averages herein presented. The conclusion is left to the teacher's imagination: her classes should approximate the same percentages! What if an individual teacher ignored the great Law of Averages, and failed to fail the customary 7%, or gave 75% of the pupils a grade of 2, or otherwise deviated from the average? You may be sure that the erring one would be summoned very shortly to headquarters and interrogated as to the reason for these devagations.

In a sense, this simplifies the problem. You have, say 7% to fail. With one hundred and fifty students, that makes ten and one half who will have to repeat the work. You may decide to be daring and fail eleven, or you may feel guilty about it, and only fail an even ten; so from all the classes you pick your ten or eleven victims, cautiously shoving the doubtful ones into a low 3, with a few words of sound advice as to working more the next term, etc. The system has this advantage, too, that the victims generally suspect that they are going to be sacrificed and may bear you no ill will. The rest rejoice in the favor of the gods.

What about those unfortunate ten? Does the teacher know the reasons for their failure? Oh yes! "lack of effort," "laziness," "incapacity," sickness, perhaps, the one pardonable reason. But does the teacher know, for instance, that number One, who happens to be of the colored race, slumps because teacher through inherited prejudices causes a paralysis of effort and will; that number Two is at a critical period of adolescence requiring a special kind of stimulant to arouse the dormant interest; that number Three lost her mother in the middle of the term; that number Four suffers from adenoids; that Number Five is of the visual type that gets strongest impressions from board work, whereas Teacher is of the auditory type that revels in lecturing; that number Six is a boy who grew five inches this term; that number Seven is terrified by Teacher's manner, which resembles that of a tyrannical mother; that number Eight has an inferiority complex caused by teasing at home; that number Nine is in rebellion against school, because the budding personality has just begun to be conscious of itself (this same lad will work ferociously, if it's something of **his own**); and that number Ten is a case of arrested or slow-growing mentality. They fail, all of them, in a lump; and this is the "system!"



I will not attempt to follow the working out of the results of these failures. In some cases, repeating the term's work may be beneficial. The student, in a leisurely manner, takes more time to absorb his modicum of learning; on the average, the results are harmful or nugatory. Generally, it simply represents a waste of time, of the teacher's and pupil's.

Let us examine the case of the Excellents. These are the flower of the system, the perfect type, the ideal for which our schools are built! Are they conspicuous personalities? Do they in after life achieve that success which consists in the wholeness, firmness, independence, roundedness, of the individual? Not necessarily. In fact, it might be questioned whether they stand out at all from the average, except as they, like the other classes of students "good," and "poor," may produce the occasional "personage." They stand as pacemakers. They keep the wheels going, by example of their amenability. It is quite possible that this example is not at all a wholesome one, either for themselves or the others.

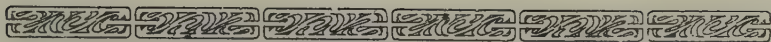
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## *Nepenthe*

By George Sterling.

There is no more wind in the tree  
I can hear no voice of the sea  
    But a murmur far away.  
    The surf is gentle to-day,  
And its snowy tendrils reach  
To the shells on the lonely beach  
    With a cadence of delay.

There is no more cry in my heart;  
For the years have done their part—  
    For my dreams no more are met  
    To the music of regret,  
And the seas of the soul have peace.  
I can hear their moaning cease,  
    As the slumbering deeps forget.  
There is nothing more that I ask;  
For the storms have done their task,  
    And the troubled gulfs are freed.  
There is nothing more that I need  
But to gaze at the sea all day—  
To watch but the sea-gulls' play,  
    The foam and the drifting weed.



## Lord Dunsany

By M. C. D.



UNSANY once said to me: "There is no philosophy behind what I write; I write only inspiration, and above all no ulterior meaning. I find the play form or writing more pleasing than that of the short story—there's an economy of words, so now I'm writing plays."

It was his first day in New York in the autumn of 1919. Lady Dunsany and he were lunching with me.

"Don't let's talk of myself, I've been swamped with reporters, such eager, alert people, let's talk of this very wonderful New York. Another day I'll tell you of my latest play of middle class suburban Londoners.

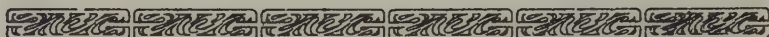
"Yes, you must," chimed in Lady Dunsany, "It's Dunsany with a difference."

Then he spoke of the wonders of Fifth Avenue, and the majesty of the Commodore Hotel. He called the skyscrapers "New York's mountains and crags, marvellous peaks behind which you can see a sunset or the moon rise, vast, beautiful things" . . . . Then he spoke of the Irish and Scottish regiments in the early days of the war—and of the trenches and the sound of guns and houses falling; of the sore throat the trenches gave him; of Yeats, at whose suggestion he wrote his first play, "The Glittering Gate," for the Abbey Theatre.

Dunsany was not a member of that realistic group called "The Irish Players." He believes that the artist should stand alone and not be a part of any art movement. He has stood alone, severely alone, for many years in England. One day a brother officer, meeting him, said, "Where have you been and what have you been doing?" "In Ireland writing poetry." "What! have you been ill?"—"That," said Dunsany, laughing, "is what they think of poets in London. If an American should speak of me to one of my brother officers as Dunsany, the dramatist, he'd probably look blank and say, 'I know Dunsany, he plays cricket.'"

He's an enormous person, reminding one of a woolly bear, with great long arms loosely hung, and fine, shaven, white hands. He was dressed in rough homespun; possibly





his clothes enhanced the shaggy effect and gave him the air of a giant.

The next day he told me of the play which dealt with dull, unimaginative people he'd kindled. "I bump very ordinary people rather suddenly into it, and leave them to find their way out." This play, "If," he thought his second best play; "Alexander" came first and "The Laughter of the Gods" third. "I've seldom seen one of my own plays acted. When the "Golden Doom" was given in London, the actor who did it thought it needed comic relief and wished the chamberlain played as a comedy character. It was impossible to make him realize that in the jest between gods and men the solemnity of man should be comic. As a playwright I ranked a little below the charwoman sweeping the theatre."

"I have learned none of the tricks of playwriting, nor what is called the technique of the theatre, I suppose. Americans have taken my plays and acted them and I am deeply grateful."

"I've written a book called 'Tales of Two Hemispheres.' If you look at the map you see an eastern and a western hemisphere, but turn to the other side and you imagine the third hemisphere, the sixth sense, the fourth dimension, known only to poets. As I said to the kind people who came to hear me speak, 'Two poets have met—the American people and I.'"

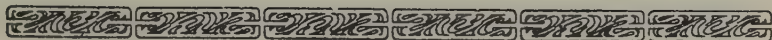
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## *Pure Pussy*

By Howell Cowell.

In Chinatown's strange tourist-luring mart  
A supercilious elongated cat  
On haunches like a throne of ivory sat, \*  
A masterpiece of oriental art.  
In vain Sir Thomas passing lost his heart:  
So exquisite a creature never spat  
In fury, clawed a lover, lest a rat  
Should sneer: "You gave your kits a craven start!"

Along her nose she looked in slit-eyed scorn  
On love and every vanity of life;  
A lady to the latter manner born,  
Disdained the hearth, the duties of a wife;  
A feline feminist, she sat aloof  
From motherhood, sly pussy lover-proof.



## *A Hitherto UnPublished Walt Whitman Letter*

(With a note by Witter Bynner.)



FIFTY YEARS ago when I was helping edit McClure's Magazine, somebody submitted an article about Whitman, and enclosed with the manuscript fifteen or twenty original letters he had received from the poet. In returning the contribution, I exhorted the said Somebody not to risk sending about through the ordinary mails, so priceless a possession, but to make copies of them for perusal by other editors. His response was a delighted note, which he accompanied with this Whitman letter as a gift to one who evidently cared about his friend.

I have long since lost the note and forgotten my correspondent's name. Perhaps publication of the letter he gave me will rediscover him, not only for me, but for editors concerned in preserving details about the Poet's life.

Certainly in these few words is exhibited, personally, that large and simple human kindness which informs and illuminates his poems.

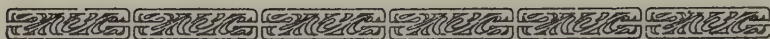
Attorney General's Office

Washington, April 4, 1870.

Dear young man:

Your affectionate letter of March 30 has reached me, and has given me much comfort—for our acquaintance in this city at the last of the war, and our being with each other so closely those two or three days and nights before you went away, have left a loving remembrance of you which will never be effaced. I am well as usual—still work in this office—still board at the same house in M Street—and I suppose hold my own generally about the same as when we were together. I suppose you have progressed a good deal and I want to hear all about it—everything about you and your fortunes will be interesting. And the sight of you, dear friend, and to have you with me again, would be more welcome than all. I will not write a long letter this time—but send you my love, and charge you to write more regularly in future.

—Walt Whitman.



## *Fantasy*

By Clarkson Crane.

I do not belong among you. I remember what others have forgotten, and am filled with secrets that live undreamed of in your hearts, curled up in crannies like tiny white worms. Voices murmur in the canyons at night, when the air is as smooth as loved skin; perfumes turn slowly around me like wreaths of pale fire; and I know the people who build for an hour changing altars under the moon.

You will hear nothing about the questions of the day, for toward them I am indifferent. I love the frail mist lying at night over the hills, and the smell of eucalyptus. And I love—but hear me:

One evening on a hillside I walked alone through the grey powder of the moon, watching the golden lights palpitate below, golden lights spangling a soft robe that someone shook, holding the corners. Sounds, bells, and distance; and above me the murmuring flow of the stars, shuffling and whisper.

And I paused in the wistful silence, and stood watching a planet that glowed sullen and lazy under the rush of stars. And I heard a rustle near me and turned.

A coyote slid from the bushes. He was like a shadow that one sees pass now and then, yet unlike the shadow he did not vanish, but paused and regarded me, his eyes like two holes in a black cloud hiding the sunset.

"Come," I muttered. And he came. He put his paws on my shoulders and peered without blinking into my eyes. Sounds, bells, and distance; and above me the murmuring flow of the stars, shuffling and whisper.

Soon he dropped to the ground and glided away into the greyness, and I remained alone. Now do you guess what I am going to tell you, and do you still want to be a comrade of mine, and wander with me at night upon the roads?

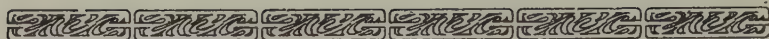






**Jackasses at Sunrise**

**Woodblock by Jozef Bakos**



## *Here Are No Heroic Halfbacks*

By R. E. Chanslor.

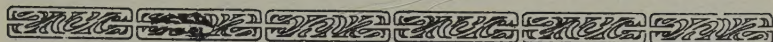


MENTION "college stories" to anyone sufficiently civilized to prefer Cabell to Hewlett and Scotch to Bourbon, and he will conjure up the thrice-damned and familiar picture of college life which the Messrs. Ralph Henry Barbour, Owen Johnson and their saccharine crew have perpetrated. In short, the tale of how the poor but honest (and alas, stupid) young man who is working himself through college, achieves a fraternity pin, a varsity letter, Skull and Bones and the beauteous gal.

Fitzgerald and Benét and Dos Passos and Edmund Wilson Jr. and a few other young men of talent, untainted by too much lachrymose college spirit, might write respectable stuff out of their college experiences, but they are concerned with larger matters. But even an university undergraduate, nay, to descend even lower, even a professor, trivial and shoddy as he is, may be made the subject of excellent fiction. Indeed, the professor cries for a Sinclair Lewis to do for him what that astute satirist did for the Rotarian. The type professor and the type Rotarian are of a piece. Both are asses. Both neither are so inconsiderable that they are unworthy of artistic treatment.

Lynn and Lois Montress in their recently published "Town and Gown" (Doran) and Paul Tanaquil in his "Smart Set" tales, "The Rat of the One-Night Stands" and "The Last Class," have broken away from the ordinary bosh which is written about university life. Realizing that all genuine stories, whatever their subject, must stand on their merits as stories first of all, these writers have set about and created, not "college stories" but authentic short stories which deal with college life. There is a vast difference between the two as you will see if you ever read these stories.

The stories in "Town and Gown," good as most of them are, are of course, nothing to cause a special meeting of the National Academy of Arts and Letters. What they do show is a knack of sympathetic observation, a talent for vivid writing and an appreciation of human character. Bringing these several talents to bear on a typical middle-

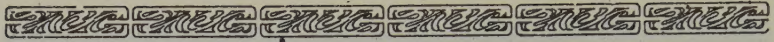


western university campus, they have salvaged from the inanity which is college life, a few brief moments, a character or two, a mood. At their best, as in "Peter Warshaw," "Between the Four Seas," "Yellow," "Dry as Dust," and "When Greek Meets Barb," they are excellent. The rest are more trivial. Such titles as "Girls Who Pet" and "The Fusser" prepare one for the worst, and surprisingly, that worst is not so bad. They have got out of the subjects here just as much as the limitations of the subjects themselves would allow. "When Greek Meets Barb" seems to me to be the worst title in the book but it is by no means the worst story. In brief, the story of the lad who aspired to the famous fraternity, his slow anger at his neglect, the misery of seeing his friends pledged, his gradual absorption in his studies to the exclusion of the social life that he so longed for and the compensating contempt for fraternities and finally the ironic, the bitter determination to show 'em all how they'd wasted their time while he was boning away at his studies. A beautiful portrait of a thoroughly third-rate Americano, the metamorphosis of a fawning, bootlicking climber into a scoffing, contemptuous "barb." Sour grapes at their sourest. And yet the author has got into the character. He makes you think and see and above all feel, which according to the greatest man writing in the English language today, Joseph Conrad, is about all an author has a right to expect.

I have spoken above of two stories of Paul Tanaquil which came out last fall in "Smart Set." The M. Tanaquil has got into bad odor in certain quarters with these stories. In "The Rat," it seems that some dozen or so co-eds saw in the gal in that story, a malicious portrait of themselves. They are all doubtless correct. In "The Last Class" certain members of the faculty of the University of California are exercised to discover thinly disguised and equally malicious portraits of themselves. They also, are doubtless correct. The first case I pass over. I am not concerned with the ethics of the case. In the second case, I am only disappointed that the Tanaquil disguised the professors as much as he did. Such asses deserve no handling with gloves. So much for the effect of the stories.

Now as to their merit. The first tale, "The Rat of the One-Night Stands," while it stands in my esteem considerably below "Heart of Darkness," is by no means negligible. It is not at all strange that divers women see themselves as the "Rat." Every college campus in America is infested

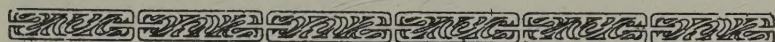




with such "rats." And not only college women are "rats" either. There are others. Ben Hecht gives a vicious, devastating picture of one in "Erik Dorn." But be not deceived by the title, which smacks slightly of indignation. Tanaquil, a civilized man, has escaped all such obvious pitfalls. It is a story of humors, sophisticated, ironic, amused, just a bit bored. It is, the local professors, who are themselves overgrown sophomores, to the contrary, not the least bit sophomoric.

But "The Last Class" is made of even better stuff. Here is less of the "Smart Set" attitude which the professors deplore, less irony, less amusement, less boredom. Personally, I look upon these, not as defects but as positive merits, that is in a certain kind of story. But "The Last Class" is simply not that kind of a story. The author has here, in the five thousand words of a short story or sketch or whatever you call things that won't fall into categories, done in a different fashion, almost the same thing that Ludwig Lewisohn did in his "Up Stream." He has shown the inevitable disillusionment which must come to every intelligent man, especially to every such man of foreign birth, who attempts in however small a way to make the sons and daughters of the goodly citizens of the republic understand. They simply do not want to understand. Indeed like any primitive savage they have only contempt for things that are beyond their intelligence. They dislike strange ideas and they dislike strange people. Tanaquil, who cultivated a superior air and carried a cane was looked upon as an ass by men so far his inferiors that they were completely anaesthetic to his contempt. Even most of his friends looked upon him as an odd one, a trifle crazy but an amusing sort of a guy and a good partner for a "party." As I started to say, Tanaquil, in "The Last Class," has taken a young university instructor who aspired to inject some of his own passion and enthusiasm into the students who "took" his course, and has shown the inevitable failure of the young instructor to accomplish anything at all. In the first place most of the students are too stupid and in the second most of his superiors in the department are even more stupid. And so the young instructor gets out of the university, as sooner or later does every professor who is worth a single damn. An unflattering picture of the American university, but, alas, a veracious picture.





## *Comment in Brief*

**Disenchantment** by C. E. Montague (Brentano's). An English dramatic critic's research into the causation of the now celebrated after-the-war disillusion. A superb exposition, beautifully written, of the gradual disenchantment of the idealistic young Englishmen who aspired to avenge the rape of Belgium and more especially of the disenchantment of the author, who corresponds roughly to the hundred-percent American of our acquaintance, save only that he is possessed of intelligence. This Montague was loaded to the gunwales with platitudinous ideals when he went into the fray. He emerged sadly disillusioned but still characteristically and sentimentally optimistic about the future. A maudlin fellow myself, at heart, I was profoundly moved by the book on first reading and was ready to proclaim it a GREAT WORK. A second and more leisurely reading, with my emotional responses dispassionately observed, convinces me that it is good, with reservations.

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**Mystery at Geneva** by Rose Macaulay (Boni and Live-right.) In which the acrid humor of "Potterism" and "Dangerous Ages" is replaced by an olla podrida of cleverness and banality. The tale itself is as obvious as the humor of "Life," but with satiric overtones, it is transformed into a moderately diverting fantasia.

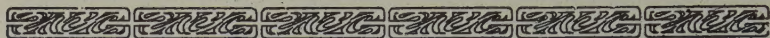
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**Futility** by William Gerhardt (Duffield.) Astounding as it may seem, here is a novel about the futility of life and subtitled, "A Novel on Russian Themes," which is lightly and cleverly done and with a deal of address and charm. A first novel worthy of respect.

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**England, My England** by D. H. Lawrence (Seltzer.) The superb work of a great and original artist, the reading of which is a genuine experience. These stories or sketches defy classification. Each one exists as an entity and it is perhaps futile to compare even one with another. Personally, I think that the title story, "England, My England," is the only completely civilized piece of writing that I have seen about the war. Lawrence's disillusion about the war, is here that of a man whose shattered illusions are no longer





a novelty to him or perhaps that of a man who never had any illusions to be shattered.

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**Phantom** by Gerhart Hauptman (Hueboh). An intense short novel, wherein the hero is relentlessly drawn to his destruction by the very force of his desire for an ideal beauty beyond his reach. Beauty is the phantom which may degrade as well as exalt. A respectable book but nothing to cause the Nobel prize to come back to Hauptman.

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**Casanova's Homecoming** by Arthur Schnitzler (Seltzer). A work of high order, which The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice tried to suppress. They caught a Tartar in Seltzer, who turned out to be so bellicose that he scared them half to death. Although, it will doubtless prove offensive to some and aphrodisiacal to others, to me it is neither. It is a fitting last chapter to the "Memoirs" and an excellent tale in itself. Moreover, it has for its theme a penetrating and ironic truth. The sports writers call such fellows as the aging Casanova "has-beens" and sum up the tragi-comic and inevitable ending trenchantly: "They never come back."

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**The Critical Game** by John Macy (Boni and Liveright). According to all the signs, John Macy should have written a much better book than the professor of English, but the fact remains that he did not. He is a more civilized man; he is a better writer; a more acute critic; he has a better record of sound achievement (vide his "The Spirit of American Literature" and Pattee's "A History of American Literature"). His introduction, wherein he opines that it is the business of the critic to make literature as well as review it, is excellent and there are a number of good sharp pieces of writing in the book, among others, his essay on Remy de Gourmont, his note on Prof. Woodberry and his final piece on D. H. Lawrence. The trouble seems to be that the pieces were carelessly chosen. Many are obviously dated, ephemeral; some are merely more essays that contribute nothing, either in manner or matter. This man can write sound, and what is more, interesting books. Bring on "The Story of the World's Literature."

